

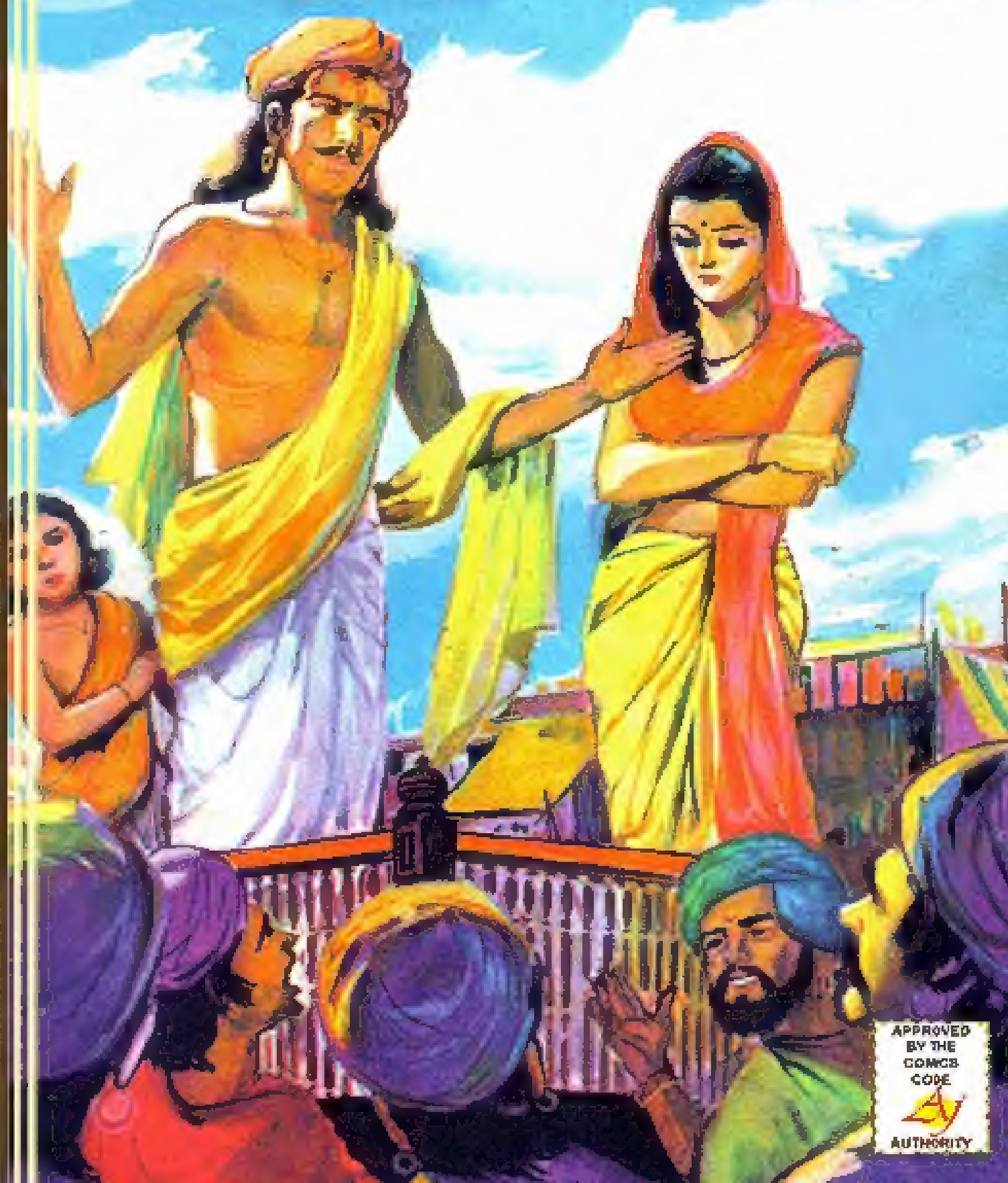


No. 17

# HARISCHANDRA

THE STORY OF THE MYTHOLOGICAL KING WHOSE  
NAME IS SYNONYMOUS WITH TRUTH

AMAR  
CHITRA  
KATHA



APPROVED  
BY THE  
COMCB  
CODE  
  
AUTHORITY

India is a land of countless legends and stories. A few of them have survived the onslaught of time and remained alive over the centuries. One such story is that of Harischandra, the king whose honesty was unmatched.

The story as it has come down to us has many variations, from the original narration in the Markandeya Purana. The folk-singers, the poets and the dramatists, have all handled the story and have all added to it—an incident here, a character there—for greater effects. It is worth mentioning that Gandhiji whose experiments with truth are justly famous, was greatly inspired by a dramatic representation of this story, which he had seen in his boyhood.

The story of a king, who, pitted against forces immensely more powerful than himself faces them with an unflinching faith in integrity, is not only dramatic but ennobling. That is the secret of its everlasting appeal.

**Amar Chitra Katha** is a continuing series  
and two titles are published every month.  
Over 150 titles are now on sale.

# HARISCHANDRA

IT WAS THE ERA OF TRETA! HARISCHANDRA WAS THE KING OF AYODHYA! A RIGHTEOUS KING, HE WAS LOVED AND RESPECTED BY ALL HIS SUBJECTS. ONE DAY HARISCHANDRA HAD GONE TO THE FOREST WHEN HE HEARD A CRY...



THINKING IT WAS A WOMAN IN DISTRESS,  
HARISCHANDRA RUSHED TOWARDS THE SOUND.  
SOON HE CAME UPON A CLEARING IN THE WOOD.







A FEW DAYS LATER, HARISCHANDRA WAS SEATED ON HIS THRONE. SUDDENLY A LOUD VOICE BROKE THE SILENCE.

HARISCHANDRA!



AS VISHVAMITRA APPROACHED HIM, THE KING FELT UNEASY.

I HAVE COME FOR WHAT YOU PROMISED ME! I WANT YOUR KINGDOM!

MY KINGDOM?



YES! IF YOU FAIL TO KEEP YOUR PROMISE, MY CURSE WILL COME UPON AYODHYA!



AS THE HUSHED COURTIER'S WATCHED, HARISCHANDRA TOOK THE SAGE INSIDE.



THE MINISTERS TRIED TO REASON WITH THE ABDICATING KING.



THE WHOLE CITY CAME TO THE ROAD TO WATCH THE THREE LOVELY PEOPLE, HARISCHANDRA, QUEEN SAVYA AND PRINCE ROHITASWA, GOING AWAY. THEY ALL WEPT, FOR THEY LOVED THEIR KING, THEIR QUEEN AND THE YOUNG PRINCE.



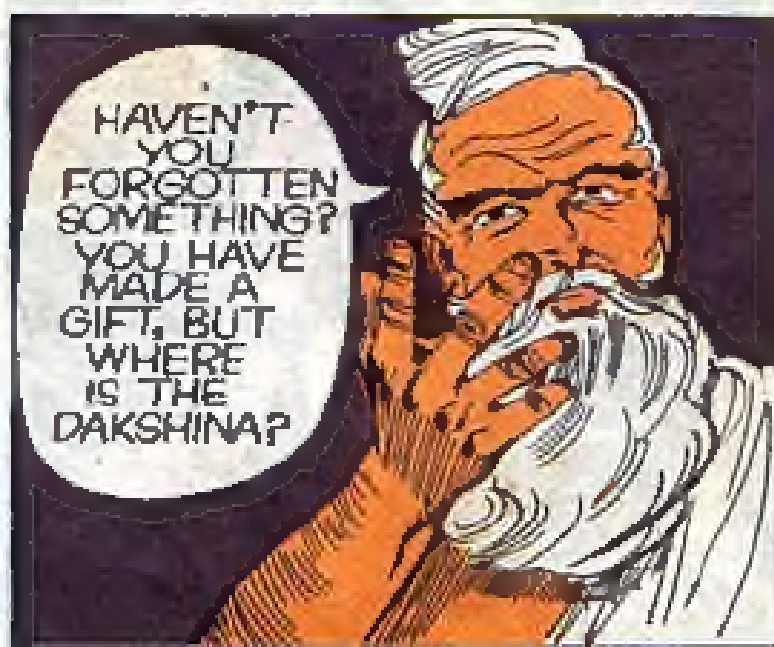


AFTER WALKING A FEW MILES, HARISCHANDRA HEARD SOMEONE CALL HIM FROM BEHIND. HE TURNED ROUND TO FIND THE SAGE VISHNAMITRA COMING TOWARDS THEM.



WAIT!

WITH EVERY GIFT GIVEN, ONE HAD TO GIVE A DAKSHINA - AN HONORARIUM! HARISCHANDRA HAD GIVEN AWAY EVERYTHING! HE HAD NOTHING LEFT FOR DAKSHINA!



HAVEN'T YOU FORGOTTEN SOMETHING? YOU HAVE MADE A GIFT, BUT WHERE IS THE DAKSHINA?

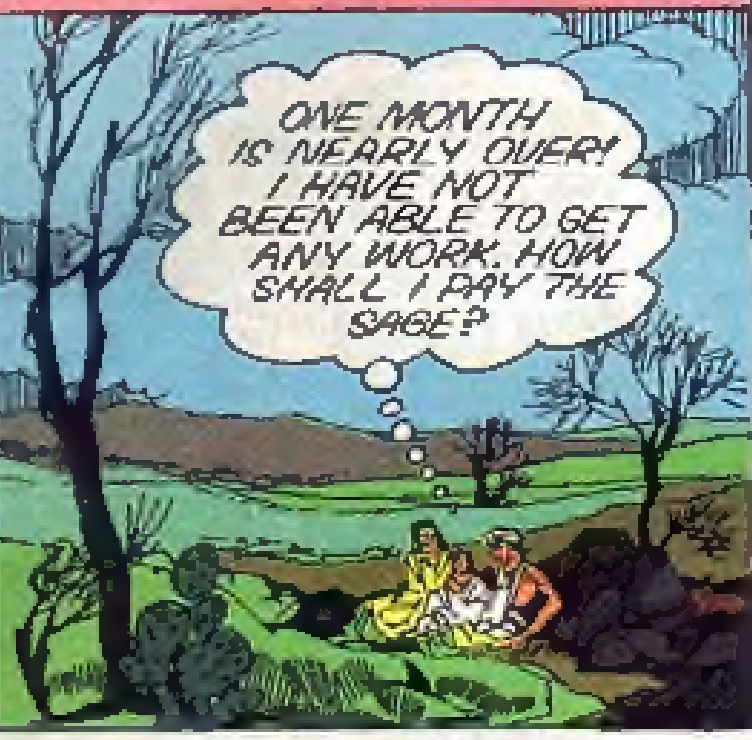


YOU MUST FULFIL YOUR PROMISE! YOUR DAKSHINA IS DUE!

PLEASE GIVE ME A MONTH!




THE KING AND THE QUEEN AND THE YOUNG PRINCE ROHTASNA ROAMED FROM LAND TO LAND. IT WAS A LONG JOURNEY, THROUGH FORESTS, THROUGH DESERTS.




ONE MONTH IS NEARLY OVER! I HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO GET ANY WORK. HOW SHALL I PAY THE SAGE?

AT LAST THEY REACHED THE TEMPLE CITY OF VARANASI.



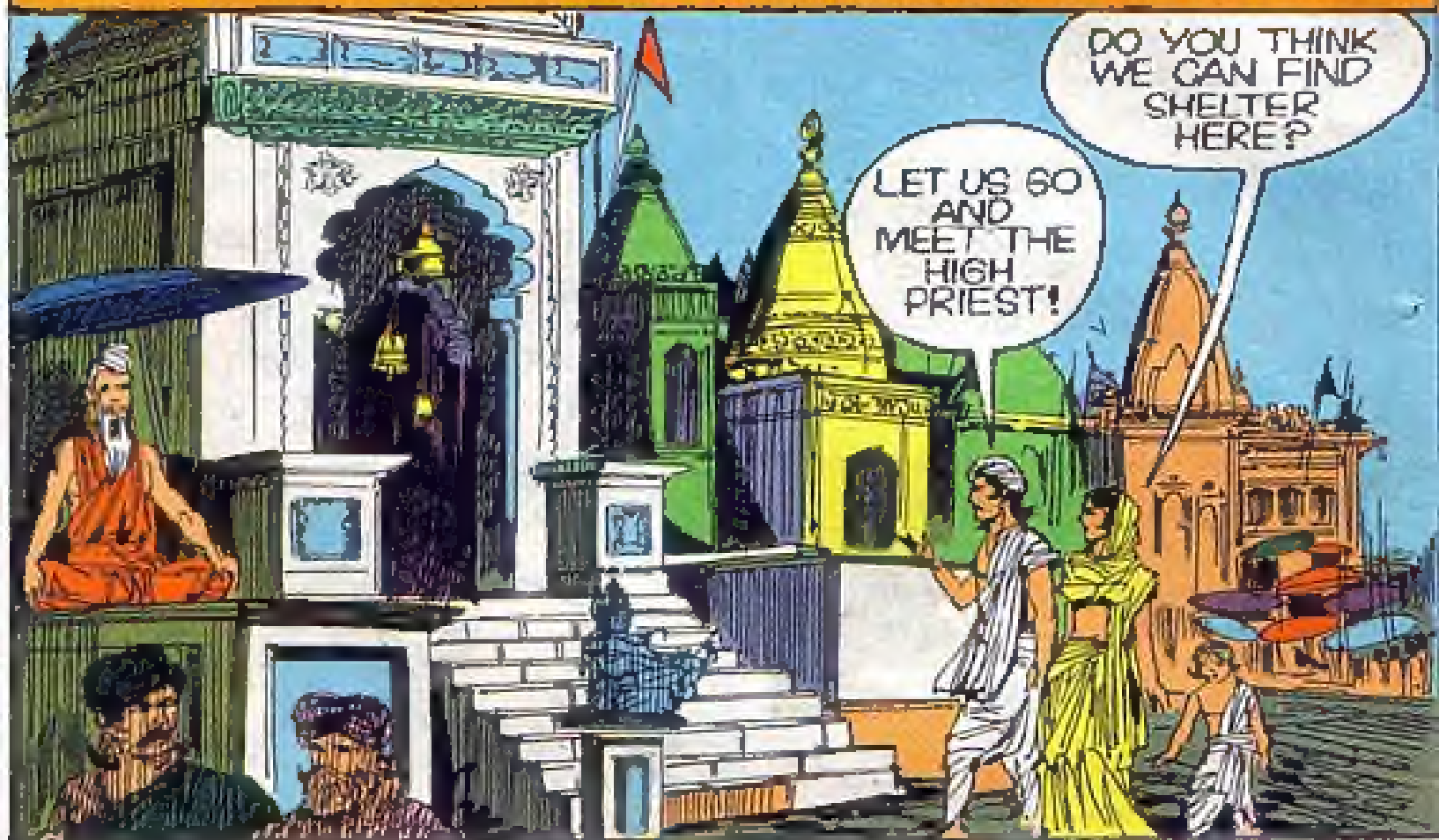
I HOPE I SHALL GET SOME WORK HERE!



HOW LONG SHALL WE ROAM LIKE THIS? THE CHILD IS TIRED.

FATHER! WHY DIDN'T YOU BRING OUR CHARIOT?

THE TEMPLES OF VARANASI STOOD MAJESTICALLY ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER GANGA. THE TIRED KING AND HIS FAMILY WENT UP TO A TEMPLE.









MOTHER! I AM  
VERY HUNGRY!  
PLEASE GIVE  
ME SOME FOOD!

YES, DEAR!  
YOUR FATHER  
HAS GONE TO  
LOOK FOR WAMP!  
HE WILL FIND  
SOME FOOD!



TAKE THIS FOOD! I BROUGHT  
IT FROM THE T-MALL!

DO WE HAVE TO  
FEG FOR  
OUR FOOD  
N AMP



THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY  
TO FEEL MORE WAMP!  
I CAN SELL MYSELF!

OH,  
NO!  
NO!

THE MARKET PLACE.



THE DEEPER PART OF  
SOCIETY AFTER THE ADIV



QUEEN SARVA HAD HEARD WHAT  
THE PRINCE HAD SAID. SHE  
HAD DECIDED HER FUTURE.

NO ONE WILL BUY YOU!  
BUT YOU HAVE SOMETHING  
ELSE FOR SALE.

WHAT  
DO  
YOU  
MEAN?

I HAVE GIVEN YOU  
A SON! MY LIFE IS FILLED!  
SELL ME AND PAY  
YOUR DEBT!

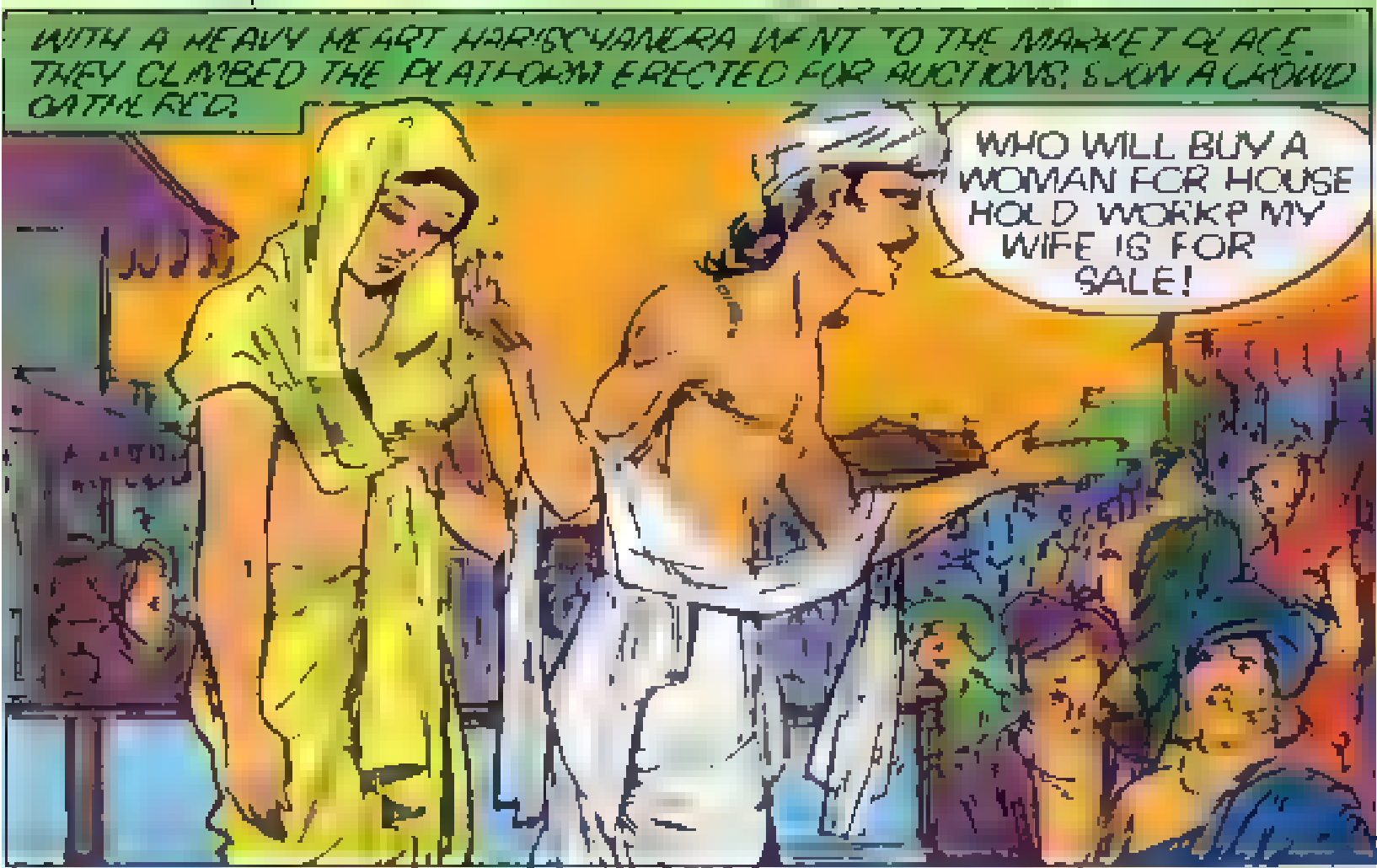
DO YOU  
KNOW  
WHAT  
YOU ARE  
SAYING?  
SELL  
MY OWN  
WIFE?

TRUTH IS MORE  
IMPORTANT THAN  
HUMAN FEELINGS! YOU  
MUST UPHOLD THE TRUTH!  
DO YOU REMEMBER  
WHAT THE  
SAGE SAID?


YES,  
I REMEMBER!




WITH A HEAVY HEART HARI'S CHANDRA WENT TO THE MARKET PLACE. THEY CLIMBED THE PLATFORM ERECTED FOR AUCTIONS. SOON A CROWD GATHERED.



WHO WILL BUY A  
WOMAN FOR HOUSE  
HOLD WORK? MY  
WIFE IS FOR  
SALE!



WHAT  
KIND OF A  
MAN ARE  
YOU TO SELL  
YOUR WIFE?



I AM NO MAN  
BUT A HEART-  
LESS MONSTER.  
BUT MUST  
DO WHAT I  
MUST DO!

A BRAHMAN OFFERED  
TO BUY THE QUEEN.

I WILL  
TAKE  
HER!

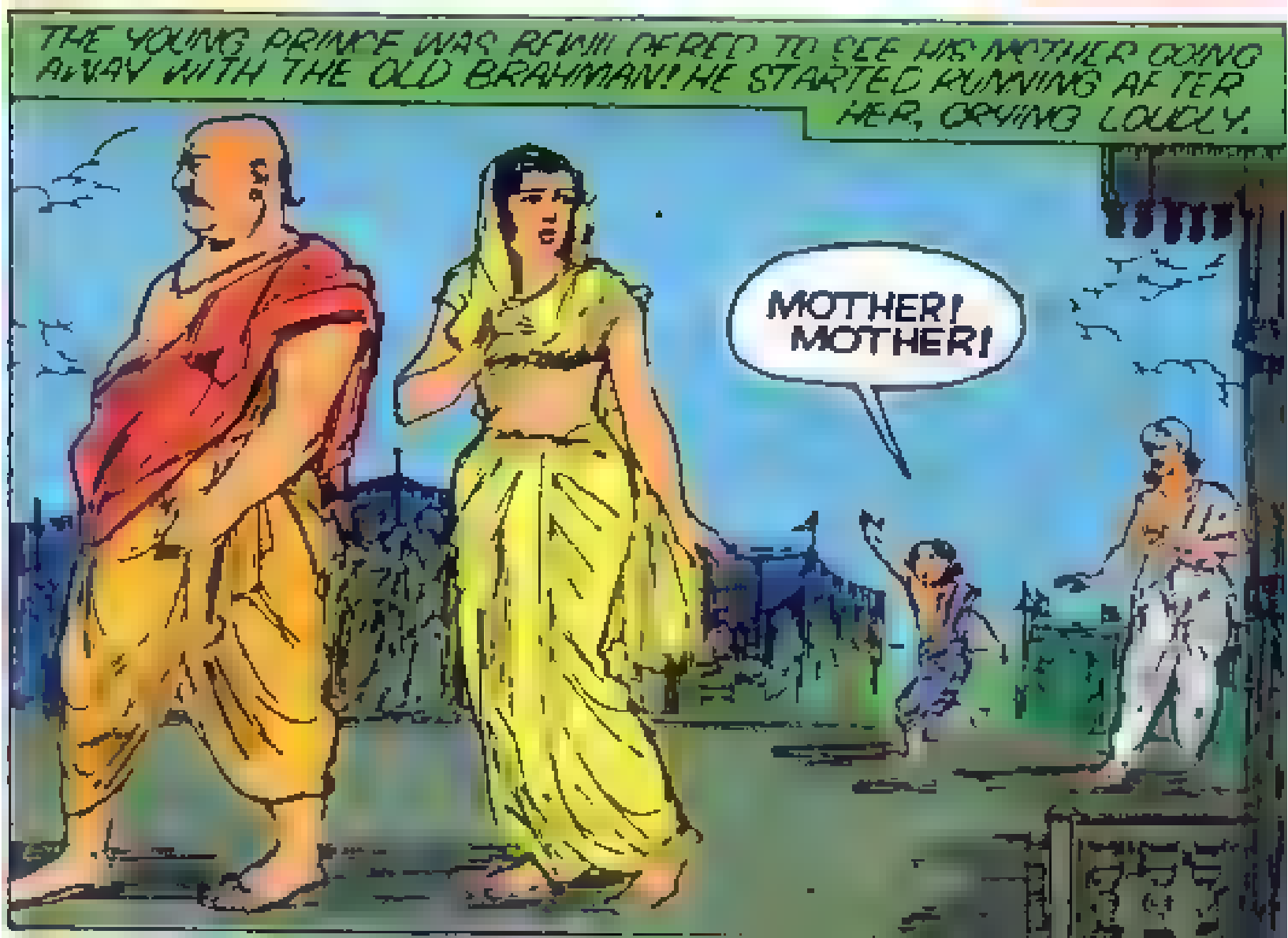
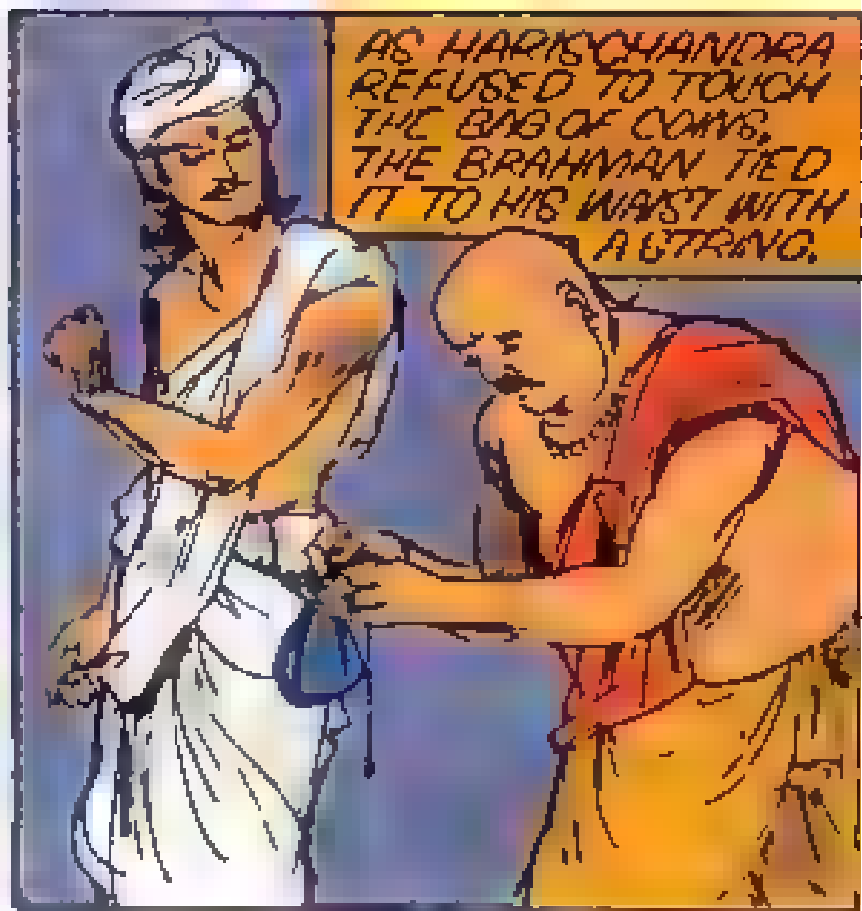
WHAT  
WEEK WILL  
YOU  
GIVE  
HER?

SHE WILL  
BE MY  
WIFE'S  
SERVANT.  
WHAT IS  
HER  
PRICE?

HOW CAN A MAN  
FIX THE PRICE  
OF HIS WIFE, THE  
MOTHER OF  
HIS SON?

THE BRAHMAN WAS DELIGHTED HE  
COULD OFFER ANY PRICE HE LIKED

THEN TAKE THESE  
FIVE HUNDRED GOLD  
COINS AND GIVE UP ALL  
CLAIM ON HER!





HEARING HER SON'S CRY, THE QUEEN'S  
HEART WAS FILLED WITH PAIN!  
SHE COULD NOT GO FARTHER!

MOTHER!  
WHERE  
ARE YOU  
GOING?

COME ALONG! WE ARE  
GETTING  
LATE!



PLEASE LET ME  
TAKE HIM WITH ME!  
HE CAN'T LIVE  
WITHOUT ME!



THE BRAHMIN WAS GLAD HE COULD BUY THE CHILD ALSO. HE  
OFFERED SOME MORE WRAVE / AS THE PRICE OF YOUNG KUNTHASNA.

HERE'S ANOTHER  
TWO-FE IV! I SHALL  
BUY THE BOY  
AS WELL!

MY  
SON  
TOO!



HADIMYDAN WA STOOD HELD EFGY WATCHING HIS WIFE AND SON  
HEING THAT I AMY BY THE OWN WHO HAD EIGHT THEM.



HARYSHANDRA UNTHO THE  
PURSE FROM HIS BELT AND  
GAVE IT TO THE SAGE.

WHAT IS THIS? THIS  
IS NOT ENOUGH!!  
YOU HAVE TO PAY  
ME TWO-FIFTY MORE!

NOT  
ENOUGH?  
BUT I'VE  
NOTHING  
ELSE  
LEFT!

GET IT  
SOMEHOW.  
I SHALL  
COME AT  
NIGH -  
FALL!

UNTHA GOT VERY HEARTY FOR HIM AND SAT DOWN ON THE STEPS  
BEFORE THE HOUSE. THE LORD AND MINE HE HAD NO WAY  
OF EARNING MORE MONEY FOR HIMSELF.

I'M TRYING  
ONCE MORE!



RETURNING TO THE MARKET-  
PLACE, HARISCHANDRA STOOD ON  
THE PLATFORM AGAIN-THIS  
TIME A LONELY FIGURE.



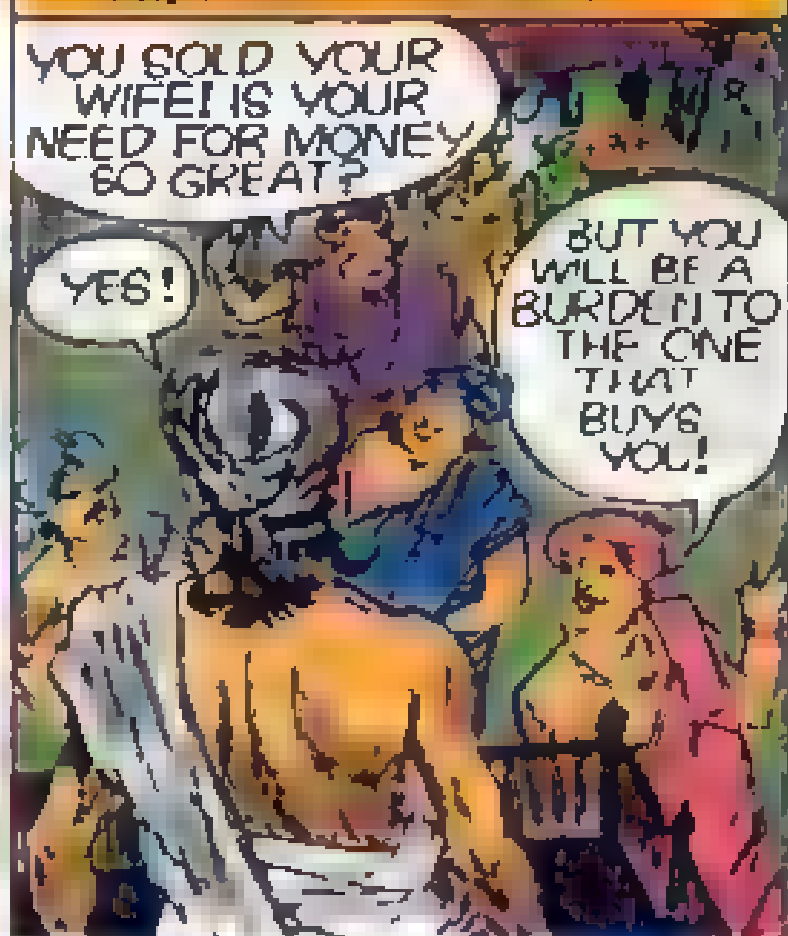
WHO WILL  
BUY A MAN  
AS HIS  
SLAVE?

THE PEOPLE RECOGNISED  
HIM. MANY LAUGHED

YOU SOLD YOUR  
WIFE! IS YOUR  
NEED FOR MONEY  
SO GREAT?

YES!

BUT YOU  
WILL BE A  
BURDEN TO  
THE ONE  
THAT  
BUYS  
YOU!



AT THE WORDS OF THE LONELY MAN, A CHARITABLE MAN WHO WAS THE  
KEEPER OF THE CHAKRA IN LAKSHMI NAGAR, WENT TO THE MARKET.



I SHALL BUY  
YOU, IF YOU WISH  
TO BE BOUGHT!

I AM STRONG! IT'S  
ONLY THAT I'VE NOT  
EATEN FOR A FEW DAYS!  
WHO WILL BUY ME?



A SKULL AND A  
STICK IN HIS HANDS!  
HE IS A  
CHANDALA!

WILL  
YOU WORK  
FOR ME?



HAVE I  
COME TO SUCH  
A LOW STATE  
THAT I HAVE TO  
WORK WITH  
CHANDALS?

BUT HIRISCHANDRA HAD NO CHOICE THE  
DAY WOULD BE OVER SOON AND THEN  
VIRADAMITHA WOULD COME FOR  
HIS MONEY.



YOU'LL HAVE TO PAY  
ME TWO HUNDRED  
AND FIFTY  
GOLD COINS!


ALL RIGHT!  
FOLLOW ME!

AFTER PAYING VISHVAMITRA HIS DAKSHINA, HARISCHANDRA WALKED WITH HIS NEW MASTER TO THE PLACE OF WORK.




WHAT WORK DO I HAVE TO DO?

WHATEVER WORK A CHANDALA DOES!



DO I HAVE TO LIVE IN THAT HUT?



YES. YOUR DUTY IS TO WAIT ON CREMATORS AND DEMAND THE CLOTH, RICE AND MONEY. A SIXTH PART GOES TO THE KING, THREE TO ME AND THE REST WILL BE YOURS!



HARISCHANDRA'S DAYS PASSED COLLECTING MONEY FROM THE CHAMBERS AND WATCHING THE FLAMES.



THE SIGHT OF THE FLARE AND THE FLAMES SOON MADE HIS FACE CHANGE HIS SKIN HAD SHRIVELLED. FEW COULD HE CHANGE HIM.



HE FELT SAD WHEN HE REMEMBERED HIS WIFE AND SON.



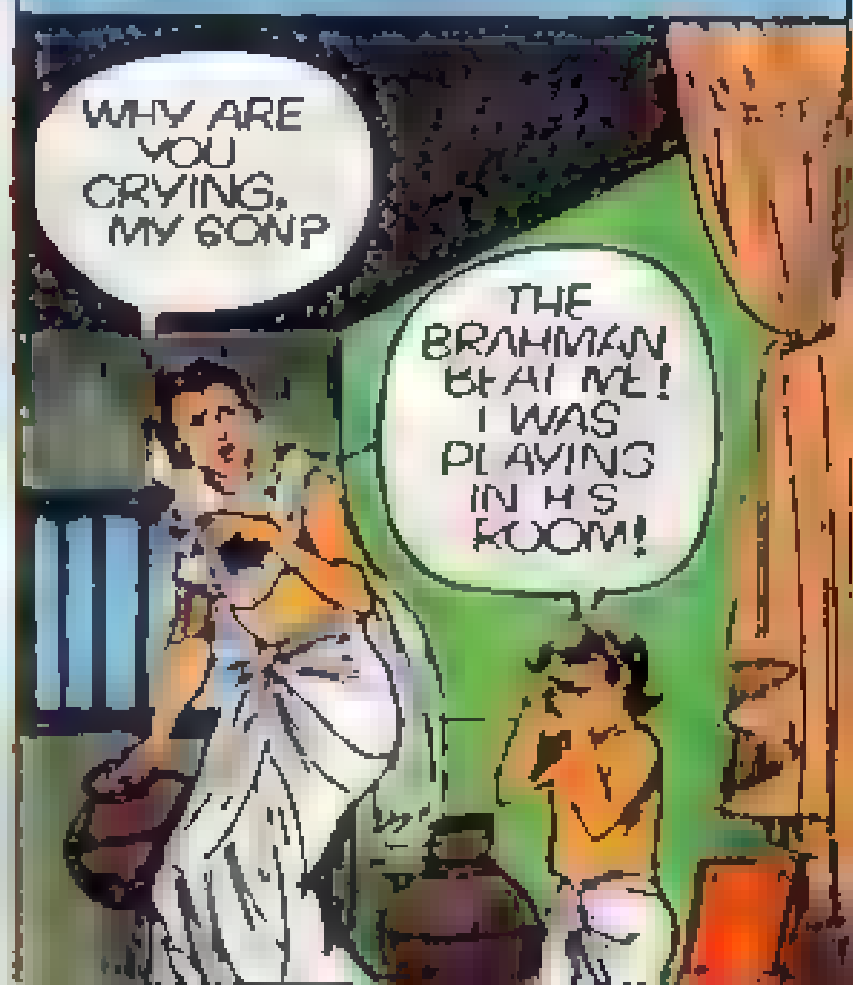
THE DAYS PASSED, THE KING WENT ON DOING HIS WORK. THE FIRE BURNT IN THE CREMATION GROUND. THE HEAT AND SMOKE WOULD VEIL HAYSHAVUKA'S EYES AND HE DREAMT OF HIS LOST KINGDOM.



HE DREAMT OF THE LITTLE PRINCE ASLEEP ON HIS PINK BED. IT ALL SEEMED SO FAR AWAY.



MEANWHILE THE QUEEN HAD TO WORK DAY AND NIGHT IN THE BRAHMAN'S MIXERIN D.



WHY ARE YOU CRYING, MY SON?

THE BRAHMAN BLAME ME! I WAS PLAYING IN HIS ROOM!

GO TO THE GARDEN! YOU CAN PLAY THERE!

ALL RIGHT MOTHER!

WHEN THE QUEEN CAME TO HER ROOM AFTER THE DAY'S WORK, SHE FOUND THE BED EMPTY. ROHITASWA WAS NOT THERE.

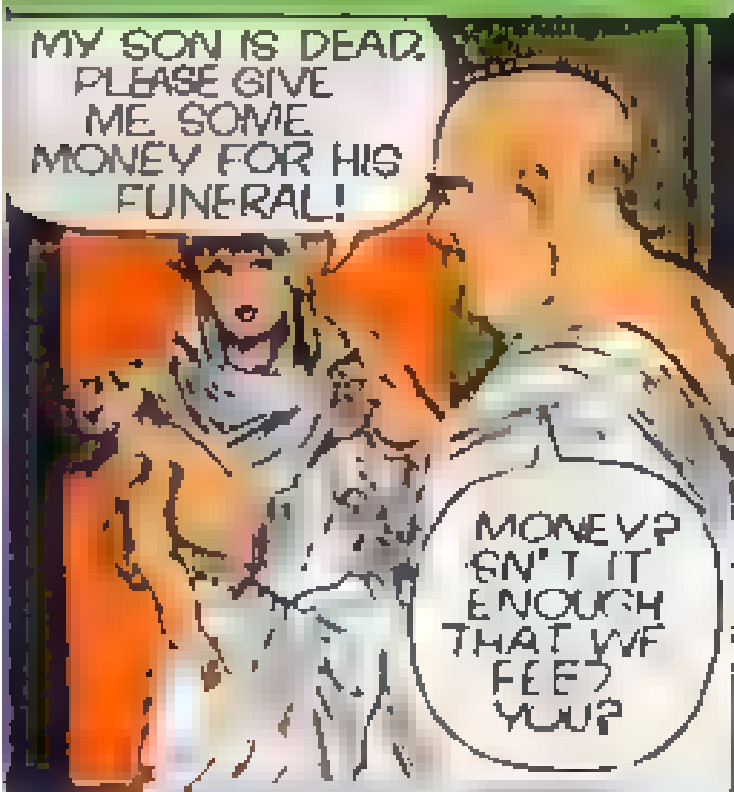
WHERE IS HE?  
WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO HIM?

HOLDING A LAMP IN HER HAND, SAVVA WENT FROM ROOM TO ROOM LOOKING FOR HIM & IN THE END SHE HE ENTERED THE GARDEN.

DOOR ROHITASWA!  
HE IS SLEEPING UNDER THE TREE!

HE IS COLD!  
WHAT ARE THESE MARKS ON MY SON! A SERPENT HAS BITTEN HIM!

HER EYES FILLED WITH TEARS, THE QUEEN CARRIED THE LITTLE CHILD BACK TO THE HOUSE AND AWOKED THE BRAHMAN.



QUIETLY, WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD, THE QUEEN STARTED WALKING THROUGH THE DESERTED STREET OF THE CITY.



NEAR THE GATE OF THE CREMATION GROUND, THE BEARDED CHANDALA BLOCKED HER WAY.



HARSHANANDA COULD NOT SEE THE WOMAN'S FACE WHICH WAS COVERED BY A VEIL.



SUDDENLY HARISCHANDRA'S EYES FELL  
ON THE DEAD CHILD'S FACE.



THE CHILD'S  
FACE BEARS  
THE MARK  
OF ROYALTY!  
WHO IS HE?

WHY IS  
MY HEART  
BEATING SO  
FAST?



HE IS INDEED  
A ROYAL CHILD!  
HIS FATHER  
WAS  
HARISCHANDRA!



WHAT DID  
YOU SAY?

MY SON!  
MY SON!





THE WOMAN WAS STARTLED WITH THE CRY. THE VOICE SEEMED FAMILIAR. SHE PEERED CLOSE AT THE BEARDED, SHRIVELLED FACE.

WHY DID YOU CRY OUT? LET ME LOOK AT YOUR FACE... MY HUSBAND!

YES! I'M THAT WRETCHED MAN! BUT YOU WILL HAVE TO BRING THE CLOTH AND RICE!

MY HUSBAND WHO WAS A KING IS NOW A CHANDALA? YOU ARE ASKING THE PAYMENT FOR YOUR SON'S FUNERAL?

I HAVE NO CHOICE! I CANNOT DEPRIVE MY MASTER OF HIS DUES!





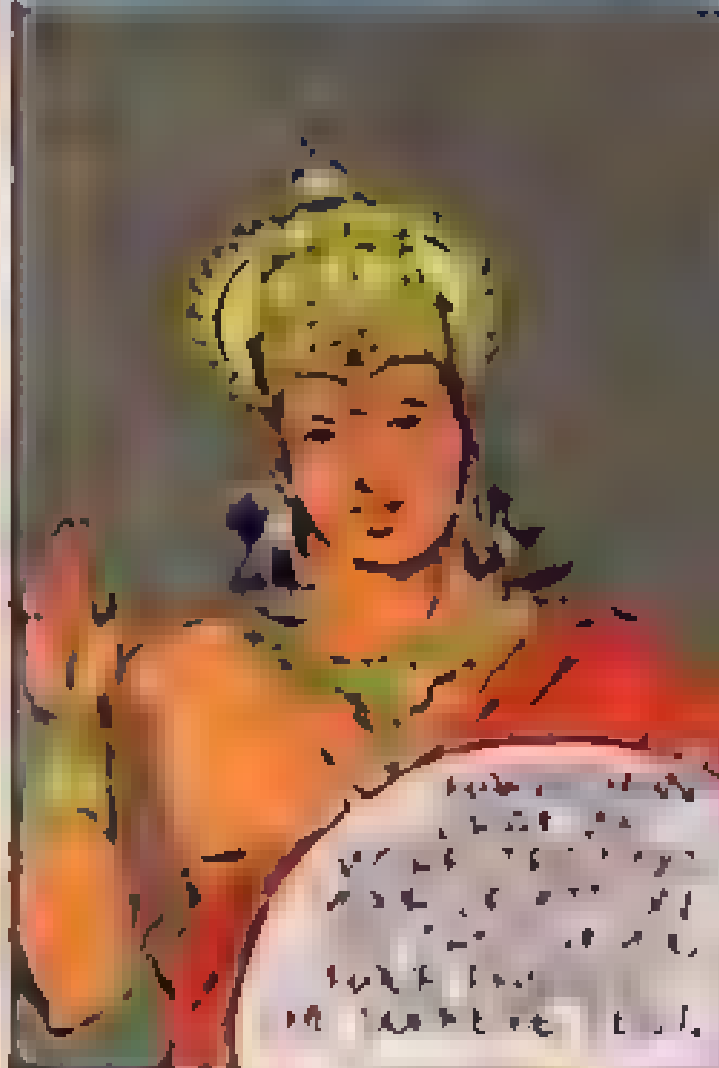
THAT WAS THE (MAYBE) ONLY REASON  
 WHY HE HAD TO GO TO THE  
 END OF THE LINE. (MAYBE) HE HAD  
 NO OTHER CHOICE TO SEE THEM



WHAT  
 DOES THIS  
 MEAN?



THAT IS WHY, THE KING OF  
 THE WORLD, (MAYBE) HE HAD



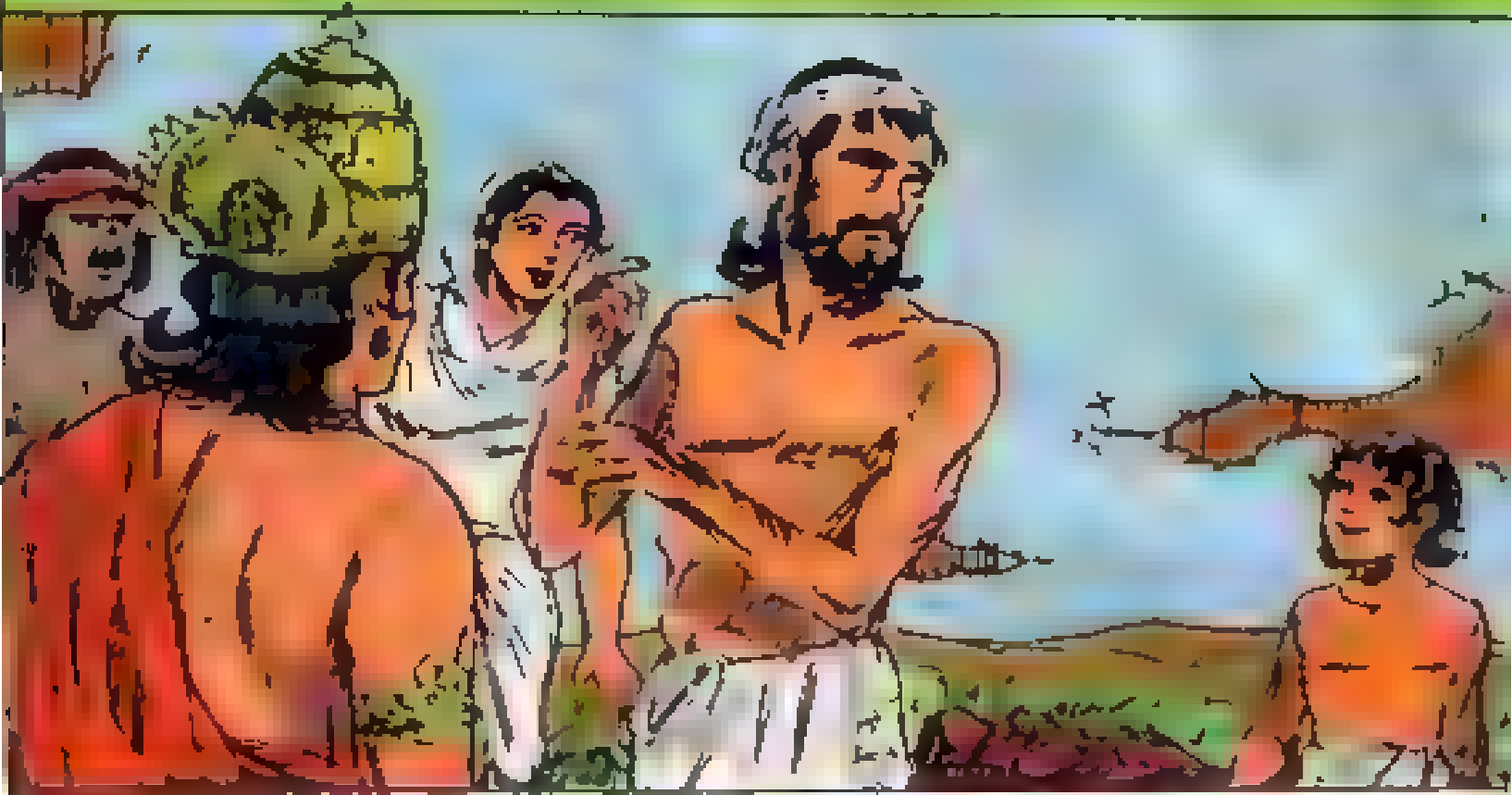
THAT IS WHY  
 THE KING OF  
 THE WORLD  
 (MAYBE) HE HAD

BUT, MY LORD, DID  
 YOU HAVE TO TEST  
 ME BY TAKING  
 AWAY MY (MAYBE)  
 CHILD?



THAT IS WHY

SEEING INDRA'S SMILE, THE PUZZLED KING TURNED HIS EYES TO WHERE HIS SON'S BODY LAY. HE SAW A STRANGE SIGHT. ROKITRANA WAS STANDING THERE DRINKING.



THEN SOMEONE CALLED HIM SOFTLY

HARISCHANDRA! MY FRIEND, FORGIVE ME FOR TESTING YOU SO HARSHLY!

SAGE VISHVAMITRA



I HAVE COME TO TAKE YOU TO YOUR KINGDOM

BUT HOW CAN I GO. I HAVE SOLD MYSELF TO THE CHANDALA







WORD HAD REACHED THE KINGDOM THAT THE KING WAS COMING BACK. PEOPLE CAME OUT OF THEIR HOUSES TO WELCOME THEIR KING.



THE STREETS WERE LINED BY PEOPLE. MANY WERE CRYING WITH JOY. THE KING WHOM THEY LOVED SO MUCH WAS COMING BACK.



Daddy!  
Read me a  
Story.



Choose your story from the  
**ECHO** treasure-house  
of folk and animal lore,  
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